

## **Evaluation of Selected Activities in the Accreditation System**

### **March 2011**

#### **Overview of this Report**

This item discusses the extent to which standards which are found to be less than fully met during the accreditation site visit had been identified during the program assessment review process occurring two years earlier and, thus, the extent to which the program assessment process functions as a formative feedback mechanism. Data from institutions undergoing the accreditation site visit in 2009-10 provide the first opportunity to examine whether the new accreditation process provides supportive and useful feedback to institutions. The findings are preliminary as they are based on only the first year of full implementation of the accreditation activities. Staff will monitor the relationship between the program assessment and site visit processes annually to ensure the revised accreditation system is performing as intended.

#### **Staff Recommendation**

This is an information item.

#### **Background**

The accreditation process requires that, in year four of the seven year accreditation cycle, institutions submit narratives responding to program standards and accompanying documents that help substantiate the narratives. Two trained Board of Institutional Reviewer (BIR) members review each program's documents to determine whether the institution's responses appear to be preliminarily aligned to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) program standards. Feedback is provided by reviewers that identify narrative sections (or sub-standards) that appear to be preliminarily aligned with adopted program standards and those for which the reviewers need additional information. Institutions then submit additional information with the goal of having all program standards preliminarily aligned before the site visit.

During year six of the accreditation cycle, all programs in all institutions undergo an accreditation site visit during which trained BIR members work as a team to review updated documents and interview relevant stakeholders. The purpose of the site visit is to either: 1) confirm that each standard in each program that was deemed in program assessment to be preliminarily aligned does, in fact, meet the CTC-adopted program standards, or 2) that a standard that was deemed to be preliminarily aligned is found, through additional review of documentation and interviews with relevant stakeholders, to be 'met with concerns' or 'not met'. Further, a program standard that was not found to be preliminarily aligned (because the request for additional information had not been satisfied) during the program assessment process can be found at the site visit to be, either, aligned with the standards and therefore 'met' or 'met with concerns' or 'not met.' In cases where the program assessment documentation was seriously inadequate, and few, if any standard could be found to be preliminarily aligned after additional information had been submitted, an additional site visit team member would be assigned to focus exclusively on that program. This reviewer would perform a complete review at the site. The result of that focused review could be that all standards are met or that some standards are less than fully met.

The program assessment submission and review of documents in the fourth year of the accreditation cycle was designed to provide formative feedback to institutions so that, by the time of the site visit,

the institution had remedied the that identified program concerns, was less likely to have findings at the site visit that might influence an accreditation recommendation, and so that the visit could focus more on unit-level functioning as reflected in the Common Standards. The program assessment process supports a self-correcting mechanism that places responsibility on the program sponsor to maintain familiarity with the standards, to self-monitor, and to ensure that program documentation is updated on a regular basis. Additional benefits of the formative processes are that site visit team members can review multiple programs as a group which results in fewer team members, and, ultimately, might permit shorter visits with a concomitant reduction in costs borne by the institution and by the state.

### **Purpose of the Item**

Two questions are asked of the data; 1) is there evidence that institutions used program assessment reviewer feedback in a formative fashion, e.g., to better align their programs to the standards, including developing more detailed documentation, and 2) in the case where program standards were found to be less than fully ‘met’ at the site visit, had those standards been identified as needing more information during program assessment? In other words, is the program assessment review process a valid and reliability predictor of concerns that would be identified by the site visit team if not remedied prior to the site visit?

### **The Data**

In Table 1, below, every row reports information from one institution that participated in a site visit during the 2009-10 year. The columns under the heading “Program Standards Findings,” contain the numbers identifying each standard that was found to be less than fully ‘met’ by the site visit team. The five columns under the heading “Program Assessment: Standards Not Aligned Prior to the Site Visit” identify the educator preparation programs and standards that had not been preliminarily aligned prior to the site visit. Highlighted text in the table draw attention to those program standards found to be less than ‘met’ or ‘aligned’ by **both** the site visit team and the program assessment reviewers.

A review of data from the table provides the following preliminary findings to the questions posed above:

- 1) It appears that the majority of the institutions utilized program assessment reviewer feedback in a formative fashion to either re-align their programs to the standards or to develop more documentation that showed how the programs were aligned with standards. Support for this can be found in the number of institutions with no program standards less than fully ‘met’ at the site visit but with multiple standards ‘not preliminarily aligned’ following program assessment.
- 2) PA results do not predict whether the site visit team will find program standards less than fully ‘met.’ However, when program standards were found to be less than fully ‘met’ at the site visit, in the majority of the cases, the program assessment reviewers had identified those standards as concerns. Of the nine programs with standards less than fully met at the site visit, program assessment reviewers had identified concerns with seven of them. More to the point, half of the standards not fully ‘met’ at the site visit had also not been ‘preliminarily aligned’ following program assessment. This finding affirms the validity and reliability of the program assessment process for preparing for a successful visit and

the revised system's intent to provide useful, informative feedback to program sponsors and their institutions.

**Next Steps**

At a future COA meeting, staff will provide additional information on the feedback collected regarding the implementation of the Commission's accreditation system. Staff invites suggestions from the COA on questions the Committee would find useful.

**Table 1. Program Standards Findings from Site Visits (2009-10) and Program Assessment Reviews (2007-08)**

	Program Standard Findings		Program Assessment (2007-08) Standards Not Aligned Prior to the Site Visit				
	Concerns	Not Met	MS/SS	SS	Core Ed Spec	Ed Spec M/M	Ed Admin
1	0	0	1, 4,5, 6,7, 9, 19, 20	Aligned	11,13		L II: 7, 8, 9
2	0	0	7, 10, 12, 14, 15,			Aligned Aligned	L I: 1, 3, 10, 11, 13,
3	0	0	Aligned	Aligned	9, 10, 11	Incomplete PA	No PA
4	Admin LI: 8	0	Aligned		9-11, 13, 14, 17-19, 21 LII 15-16,19	23, 24	L I: 7, 8, 11-15
5	MS/SS: 18 (a,e,f,g) Admin L1: 7C	0	1-3, 6, 11		Aligned	Aligned	L I: 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11
6	1, 2, 4, 7A, 7B, 13, 14, 15, 16	8A, 8B	7A, 7B, 8A, 8B, 10		No programs		
7	Ed Sp MM/MS LI: 13, 18, 21	0	TA visit				
8	0	0	Aligned		1-8, 11, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21	L1: 22, 25 LII: 16, 19, 20	No PA
9	MS/SS: 8B, 10	0	2, 5, 7A B, 8A, 8B, 10, 13, 14		No programs		
10	MS: 7, 14	0	TA 2, 3, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 21	No programs			
11	0	0	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8A B, 9, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17,	No programs			
12	M/S/SS: 1, 2, 8B EdSpLI: 6, 11, 13, 14, 17, 22, 25	0	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8B, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18		11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18	22, 23, 25	No programs
13	0	0			21		

**Bold indicates the standard was identified in Program Assessment as not Preliminarily Aligned and the site visit team found the standard less than fully met**